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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 SARAJEVO 001071

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [KCRM](#) [PTER](#) [BK](#)

SUBJECT: BOSNIA: SADOVIC POLITICIZES MINISTRY OF SECURITY

Classified By: Ambassador Douglas McElhaney. Reasons 1.4 (b),(d)

11. (C) Summary: Since his January appointment, Tarik Sadovic has adopted a highly political approach to his role as Minister of Security and worked almost exclusively to advance Bosniak ethnic interests. Sadovic has excluded non-Bosniak Ministry officials, including the Deputy Minister, from policy decisions, resisted USG-backed plans to create an interagency counterterrorism task force, and expressed an intent to evade his statutory role in confirming deportation orders. His actions are a marked departure from the constructive engagement with other parties and ethnic groups that characterized his work as a SDA delegate in the RS National Assembly. Sadovic's politicization of the Ministry has caused concern among the international community including OHR and EUPM. Sadovic's approach threatens to put the Ministry at odds with USG counterterrorism and law enforcement cooperation goals. End Summary

#### A Bosniak Agenda at the Ministry of Security

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12. (C) In January, Tarik Sadovic assumed the role of Minister with no background in public security or law enforcement issues. An architect by profession, Sadovic has been a long-time SDA party activist and, as a native of Trebinje, spent the majority of his career as a delegate to the Republika Srpska National Assembly (RSNA). As Minister of Security, Sadovic has overall responsibility for Bosnia's state level law-enforcement agencies, including the State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA), the State Border Police (SBP), and the Foreigners Affairs Service (FAS). In meetings with the Ambassador and the DCM, Sadovic has been poorly briefed and demonstrated little understanding of the security challenges confronting Bosnia. Sadovic has not demonstrated a policy vision for his tenure as minister and, in the absence of a professional agenda, seems to be using the Ministry solely to advance Bosniak interests.

13. (C) Appointed by SDA President Sulejman Tihic, Tarik Sadovic has surrounded himself exclusively with Bosniak appointees and reportedly exerted pressure on Bosniak Ministry officials to adopt a more observant approach to Islam, encouraging them to attend Friday prayers. To date Sadovic has not included any of his Croat and Serb deputies in meetings with Embassy officers and instead has included only Bosniak assistants and advisors. Sadovic has also undermined the Croat and Serb Directors of the SBP and FAS by circumventing them to engage with their Bosniak deputies.

Terrorism Skeptic

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14. (C) Minister Sadovic has actively downplayed the threat of terrorism in Bosnia and has been reluctant to engage on USG counterterrorism cooperation. In recent public comments, Sadovic stated that the only terrorist threat to Bosnia are the forces who destroyed the grave of Alija Izetbegovic. During a meeting with the DCM following the publication of the "Patterns of Global Terrorism" report, he admonished the USG not to portray Bosnia as "a haven for terrorists," saying it would scare away tourists. Sadovic's skepticism has resulted in an unwillingness to adopt a proactive approach to bilateral counterterrorism cooperation. Since early in the year the mission has worked with the Bosnian law enforcement community to establish an operationally capable interagency counterterrorism task force. Sadovic has raised bureaucratic hurdles to a USG initiative and recently told the DCM that the idea did not conform to Bosnian law, a position disputed by other law enforcement agencies and members of his own staff. (Note: As a result of follow-up discussions with working level Ministry of Security law enforcement specialists who privately told us they regretted Sadovic's position, Sadovic appears to have softened his position. He has since sent us a letter saying that he is willing to work with us to develop an Antiterrorism Task Force model. End Note.)

#### Deportation Obstructionism

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15. (C) Minister Sadovic expressed an intention to evade his statutory responsibility to confirm politically sensitive deportation orders issued by FAS. The pending deportations

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involve former mujahideen stripped of illegally obtained Bosnian citizenship by the Citizenship Review Commission (CRC) and have been the focus of high-profile advocacy by Islamic community. Despite his clear obligation under the Law on Movement and Stay of Aliens to confirm deportation orders, Sadovic suggested he will refuse to accept any cases referred to him, therefore preventing the orders from being executed. He has instead stated his intention to forward such cases to the Council of Ministers for ratification. OHR lawyers confirm that Sadovic's approach is not in accordance with the law and plan to send letters to Sadovic and the PM Nikola Spiric reiterating that the confirmation of deportation orders are within the purview of the Minister of Security. Sadovic's obstruction of deportations undermines the of the CRC, a major focus of USG counterterrorism efforts in Bosnia. Sadovic's position may also complicate USG attempts to amend legislation allowing those stripped of citizenship to reapply for naturalization.

16. (C) In addition to Sadovic's refusal to act on deportation orders, the Ministry of Security has also attempted to create additional procedural barriers to deportations. The Ministry of Security has not fulfilled commitments to coordinate its planned annual work plan with OHR and the International Organization for Migration. According to OHR, Ministry officials also recently attempted to add a provision to deportation regulations stipulating that persons with children or property in Bosnia are exempt from deportation, a measure that would render many of the former mujahideen undeportable.

#### Strengthening SIPA...for Bosniaks

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17. (C) Sadovic has stated his commitment to strengthening SIPA in order to realize its role as the premier state-level law enforcement agency in Bosnia. Sadovic seems to appreciate that SIPA's role in combating organized crime and interdicting war criminals has been hampered by bureaucratic delays in staffing, problems in the management structure, and narrow job criteria for the SIPA director and has worked with post to draft amendments to the SIPA law and the Law on

Police Officials to rectify these problems.

18. (C) However, Sadovic has expressed the opinion that, since the SBP director is a Croat and the FAS director a Serb, the next SIPA director should be a Bosniak. To date, SIPA has been treated as a ministerial position in distributing directorships among the ethnic constituencies. With Bosniaks heading the Ministries of Security and Defense as well as the Bosnian Intelligence Agency (OSA), precedent suggests that the next SIPA director should be a Serb. Minister Sadovic has also delayed the tender process for building the new SIPA headquarters. Members of the IC security community have speculated that Sadovic hopes to derail the current plans to locate the facility in Lukavica (just outside of Sarajevo in the Republika Srpska), presumably with the intent of finding a new site in the Federation.

Comment

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19. (C) Sadovic's use of the Ministry of Security to advance a Bosniak nationalist agenda is an unfortunate departure from his previous constructive approach as a Bosniak deputy in the RSNA. With no background as a security professional, Sadovic is struggling in his attempts to lead the Ministry and Bosnia's interagency law enforcement community and, out of his depth, may have defaulted to an ethnic agenda. Supported in his candidacy by Bakir Izetbegovic and the hard-line wing of the SDA, Sulejman Tihic has appeared to further distance himself from the Minister in recent months. Regardless of the reasons for his behavior, Sadovic's continued politicization of the Ministry threatens to undermine our previously robust bilateral cooperation on law enforcement and counterterrorism. We will continue to engage Sulejman Tihic and Bakir Izetbegovic to ensure that Sadovic does not undermine progress in critical security goals in Bosnia. End

Comment

MCELHANEY